

PATENT APPLICATION
IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

TITLE: ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION SERVER

INVENTORS: EIKO E. KATO, SETH C.H. LUISI, and GLEN VAN
DATTA

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FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
745 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10150
(212) 588-0800

ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION SERVER

by

EIKO E. KATO, SETH C.H. LUISI, and GLEN VAN DATTA

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This application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application 60/463,674, filed April 16, 2003, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

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BACKGROUND

In some information services, a provider deploys multiple servers accessible to clients through a network, such as the Internet. Each of the servers may be in different physical locations and operating under different network conditions. As a result, the conditions for network access by a particular client may vary from server to server. For example, the latency or delay in communication between a client and a server that is physically close to the client may be less than the latency in communication between the client and a different server that is physically farther away from the client. In another example, the number of clients accessing a server can affect the speed and performance of the server and so a server with fewer current clients may provide better performance. Accordingly, it can be desirable for a client to select one of the deployed servers with favorable network conditions relative to the client.

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SUMMARY

The present invention provides methods and apparatus implementing techniques for providing network environment information. In one implementation, an environment information server includes: a server controller; a network connection connected to said server controller; an environment information database connected to said server controller for storing data for one or more network environments; and a request handler connected to said server controller for processing requests received through said network connection; wherein said request handler exchanges data with said environment information database in the course of processing a received request.

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